The Builder.

No. CCCCLXXIV.

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 1852.

IE happened yesterday to be in one of the Thames Omnibuses, which flit about on the river from pier to pier like knats in the sunshine, and had fallen into a reverie on the miserable condition of our noble river, both in bed and on banks. The resident topographer, in the shape of a small boy in very greasy trowsers, recalled us by shouting "Lambeth; Lam—beth." So we stepped ashore, as much to escape the fearful odour which was floating over the water from the mouths of sewers opened by the retiring tide, as to see what was going on in that neglected and ill-used locality. It is a place full of interest and full of wants; but little endeavour seems to be made to maintain the one or to supply the other.

"In the earliest record extant," says Lysons, "it is called Lambehith; in Doomsday Book, probably by mistake, Lancbei; by the ancient historians it is spelt Lambee, Lambeth, Lambyth, Lamedk." Some etymologists derive the name from *Lam*, dirt, and *hyd*, or *hythe*, a haven; others from Lamb and hythe. For our own part we incline greatly to the "dirt" derivation, and would appeal to the present state of much of the district in confirmation of the opinion. Many obvious improvements suggest themselves, and there are some earnest men, dwellers there, who would assist: still nothing is done. Parts of the parish, lying near the river, are often under water, the drainage is very bad, and the general condition of the district discreditable to our age and knowledge. The bone-manure works and other factories contaminate the air, and the water with which the inhabitants are supplied was, until very recently, if it is not now, taken from the river in dangerous proximity to the mouth of the common sewer. In the first report of the Metropolitan Sanitary Commission, evidence was given that in some of the courts and streets fever was always present. At that time the average duration of life was *twenty-four* years, while at Camberwell it was thirty-four!

There are some miserable dog-holes of dwellings in Lambeth, although not worse than in many other districts,—murderous houses,—death-dealers, which no efforts on the part of the occupants will render healthful or decent. A remark thrown out by us long ago that "homes are the manufactories of men," was repeated far and wide, and made the text of many addresses, and of more than one book. Would that the obvious corollary was everywhere fully felt. From such manufactories what work must come forth!

In a pamphlet on "Home Reform," by Mr. Roberts, recently published by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, with the laudable object of answering some who, in reference to the same writer's "Essay on the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes," have asked, how their tenants might be taught to improve their own homes,—the writer says:—

"We must begin by insisting that, however much of the physical and moral evils of the working classes may be justly attributable to their dwellings, it is too often the case that more ought in truth to be imputed to themselves. For surely the inmate depends less on the house, than the house on the inmate; mind has more power over matter than matter over mind. Let a dwelling be ever so poor and incommodious, yet a family with decent and cleanly habits will contrive to make the best of it, and will take care that there shall be nothing offensive in it which they have power to remove. Whereas a model house, fitted up with every convenience and comfort which modern science can supply, will, if occupied by persons of intemperate and uncleanly habits, speedily become a disgrace and a nuisance. A sober, industrious, and cleanly couple will impart an air of decency and respectability to the poorest dwelling; while the spendthrift, the drunkard, or the gambler will convert a palace into a scene of discomfort and disgust. Since, therefore, so much depends on the character and conduct of the parties themselves, it is right that they should feel their responsibility in this important matter, and that they should know and attend to the various points connected with the improvement of their homes."

This is, to a certain extent, true, and it is of the utmost importance that it should be constantly and widely impressed. It must not, however, be taken as an excuse for not providing innoxious, decent, and comely dwellings for the working classes. Much may be done by an energetic orderly mind in any situation; but there are hundreds and hundreds of dwellings that ultimately beat every occupier, and transform the tidy housewife into the slatternly shrew, and the industrious home-loving husband into a disorderly drunkard. Where there is no "mind," "matter" has it all its own way, of course; and how is it possible that an orderly mind,—careful of proprieties, anxious to improve, sensitive against evil,—can be manufactured, or even maintained, amidst darkness, dampness, disorder, and discomfort. As we have often heard clergymen say, sermons, exhortations, visitings, and the national school, are all useless against a damp, dilapidated, ill-drained, miserable dwelling, where decency is not possible, and immorality inevitable.

We have wandered, however, from the special to the general. Let us get back to "Dirt Harbour."

St. Mary's, Lambeth, the parish church, has been rebuilt by Haward and Nixon, under the direction of Mr. P. C. Hardwick, all but the tower at the west end, which was restored a few years ago. It is of ancient foundation, but was rebuilt 1374 to 1377, and the style of that period has been adopted on the present occasion, with the exception of the open timber roof; this is of somewhat later character. The walls inside, of random stonework, are pointed, not plastered; and this, or some other cause, in conjunction with the ill-advised use of the old pews in the body of the church, old galleries, organ front, and even altar rail, though quite inappropriate, gives an air of meanness that is to be regretted. There is a new font, with lofty carved canopy, which forms an important feature. The interior is much enlivened by the glass in a rose window at the west-end of nave, which is of good colour. Several of the windows have been filled with stained glass: one in the south aisle, in memory of Mr. John Barton; a second at the east end of the same aisle, the gift of Mr. E. Groves—both creditably executed by Mr. Gibbs; and there are four memorial windows in chancel. We missed the well-known figure of The Pedlar and his Dog painted on glass, which was in a window in the old church. It is stated that a person unknown left to the parish of Lambeth a piece of land, formerly the Church Hope (now Pedlar's Acre), on condition that they kept in repair a representation of a pedlar and his dog, in stained glass in the parish church. Mr. Lysons thought it a rebus on the donor's name. There was a Mr. *Walker*, who was a benefactor to the parish, but whether or not it belongs to him is uncertain. "In 1504 the Church Hope produced only 2s. 8d. per annum. It was let on lease in 1797, at the yearly rent of 110*l.* and was capable of further improvements. A fine of 800*l.* was received by the parish, upon granting a lease in 1752."* What is it worth now?

On inquiring for the "Pedlar" we learnt from Mr. Taylor, one of the churchwardens, that the glass is in safe custody, and that it has been kept out in order that they may have "such a stained glass Pedlar and his Dog as the best talent of the day can furnish." There is, of course, no objection to this, but they must put back the old Pedlar too.

In the chancel, Mompesson's monument—a perpendicular altar-tomb, dated 1524—is set up on the south side; and a similar tomb, in memory, if we are not mistaken, of "Magistri Hugonis Peyntwin" (1504), inscription now scarcely legible, on the north side. The monumental tablets, which had overrun the old church—many of them in memory of persons who ought not to be forgotten—have been placed at the east end of the north aisle, and in the south porch. The *Athenæum* of last week gives the architect a smart cut or two for "shouldering the monuments about in a way that 'Old Mortality' would have wept at seeing;" and for either removing or concealing "some old blue ledger stones that distinguished the graves of men of name." The writer urges that "a committee of taste and associations is sadly wanted wherever an architect is now called in. Your first, second, and third Pointed men, your hip-and-thigh Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular Architects would destroy Shakspeare's tomb to replace a useless piscina."

Now, for removing or concealing memorials of men of name, if this has been done, we will find no excuse. However discordant with the rest of the building the monument may be, the value of memorials of the good and great far outweighs the objections which may be brought against them on æsthetic grounds. But, surely, when an attempt is being made to bring back to an ancient building congruity and beauty, it is desirable to dispose those incongruities—which, because of their value in other respects cannot be parted with—in the way least calculated to mar the object aimed at.

The monumental brasses at present loose will of course be put down. Here was buried Elias Ashmole, the well-known antiquary, and founder of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, who died in 1692; and in the churchyard is a monument to the Tradescants, the noted collectors. The epitaph says:—

"These famous antiquarians that had been
Both gardeners to the rose and lily queen,
Transplanted now themselves, sleep here; and when
Angels shall, with their trumpets, waken men,
And fire shall purge the world, these hence shall rise
And change their garden for a paradise."

* Hughson's "London."

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